

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

S E C R E T STATE 300139

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MOPS, CU, AO

SUBJECT: CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA: REPORT  
NUMBER 4

REF: STATE 295496

FOR AMBASSADOR OR CHARGE FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

1. WE WILL BE SENDING YOU SITREPS ON CUBAN MILITARY  
INTERVENTION IN THE ANGOLA CONFLICT AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK  
BEGINNING WITH THIS MESSAGE. UNLESS THERE IS SOME  
OVERRIDING LOCAL CONSIDERATION FOR NOT DOING SO, YOU  
SHOULD SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH APPROPRIATE SENIOR  
OFFICIALS OF HOST GOVERNMENT. THOSE MISSIONS WHICH HAVE  
NOT ALREADY DONE SO SHOULD REPORT ANY SIGNIFICANT

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REACTIONS/COMMENTS REGARDING CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION

BY SENIOR OFFICIALS. ALL MISSIONS SHOULD ALSO REPORT ON A CONTINUING BASIS MEDIA TREATMENT, PARTICULARLY EDITORIAL COMMENT.

2. THERE FOLLOWS UPDATED INFORMATION ON CUBAN INVOLVEMENT:

A. THERE MAY BE MORE THAN 6,000 CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ANGOLA.

APPROXIMATELY 3,500 MEN  
HAVE BEEN FLOWN TO ANGOLA SINCE THE AIRLIFT BEGAN.  
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE MEN  
ALSO SENT TO ANGOLA BY SHIP, THERE SHOULD BE OVER 6,000  
CUBANS PRESENTLY IN ANGOLA. WE HAD ESTIMATED THAT APPROX-  
IMATELY 3,000 HAD BEEN SENT BY AIR AND BETWEEN 1,500 AND  
2,000 BY SEA.

B. FIVE AIRPLANES ARE IN-  
VOLVED IN THE AIRLIFT. THREE ARE BRITANNIAS AND TWO ARE  
IL-18'S. ON 28 NOVEMBER 1975 TWO FLIGHTS LEFT HAVANA FOR  
THE CONGO CARRYING A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 150 SOLDIERS.  
THE SOLDIERS WERE DRESSED IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND WERE  
APPARENTLY ARMY RESERVISTS WITH EXPERIENCE IN ARTILLERY.  
THE AIRPLANES MADE STOPS IN BARBADOS, GUINEA-BISSAU, AND  
BRAZZAVILLE, CONGO. THE CARGO ON THESE FLIGHTS CONSISTED  
ONLY OF RADIOS AND UNIFORMS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE AN ATTEMPT  
HAD BEEN MADE IN BARBADOS TO INSPECT ONE OF THE AIRPLANES  
DURING A PREVIOUS FLIGHT. BECAUSE CUBAN AUTHORITIES DO  
NOT WANT ANY TROUBLE IN BARBADOS, ALL CUBAN ARMS DES-  
TINED FOR ANGOLA ARE NOW BEING SENT BY SHIP. THE MOST  
RECENT FLIGHT FOR ANGOLA LEFT HAVANA ON 14 DECEMBER. ALL  
FLIGHTS TRANSIT BARBADOS.

C. ON 3 DECEMBER 1975, TWO BRITANNIAS AND ONE IL-18 MADE  
A SIMILAR FLIGHT. THESE FLIGHTS WENT ALL THE WAY TO LU-  
ANDA. EACH AIRPLANE CARRIED APPROXIMATELY 70 SOLDIERS.  
ON ONE OF THESE FLIGHTS WERE JORGE RISQUET, A MEMBER OF  
THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCC), MAJOR  
LUIS ALFONSO ZAYAS OCHOA, A MEMBER OF THE PCC CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE, AND BRIGADIER COMMANDER FERNANDO VECINO, VICE  
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MINISTER OF THE MINISTRY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED  
FORCES.

D. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT MILITARY DEVELOPMENT TOOK PLACE  
ON 11-12 DECEMBER WHEN THE NATIONAL UNION FOR THE TOTAL  
INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA (UNITA) MADE A BREAKTHROUGH ON THE  
CELA FRONT IN NORTH CENTRAL ANGOLA. DURING THE UNITA  
ADVANCE THREE CUBAN ENLISTED MEN WERE CAPTURED. THE

UNITA FORCE HAD BEEN CONFRONTED BY SOVIET TRUCK-MOUNTED 122-MM ROCKETS, WHICH PRESUMABLY WERE OPERATED BY CUBANS.

E. LITTLE CHANGE HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE OTHER MILITARY FRONTS. NORTH OF LUANDA THE NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA (FLNA) CONTINUES UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM THE POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA (MPLA). IN THE WEST UNITA HAS RETAKEN LUSO FROM THE MPLA. IN THE WEST THE UNITA FORCE WHICH HAD ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS ALONG THE COAST IN NOVEMBER REMAINS BOGGED DOWN IN THE NOVO REDONDO AREA WHERE IT FACES A STRONG MPLA/CUBA FORCE. CABINDA REMAINS SOLIDLY IN THE HANDS OF THE MPLA. (THIS INFORMATION DATED DEC. 17.)

F. AS OF THIS WRITING FIDEL CASTRO HAS MADE NO SPECIFIC MENTION OF CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN HIS SPEECHES TO THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CUBA WHICH BEGAN ON 17 DECEMBER. ON 18 DECEMBER, HOWEVER, HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE CONGRESS THAT THE CUBAN ARMED FORCES ARE WILLING QUOTE TO SHED BLOOD MORE THAN ONCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES THREATENED BY IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION UNQUOTE.

G. ON 15 DECEMBER, TWO CUBANA FLIGHTS RETURNING FROM AFRICA AND ONE CUBANA FLIGHT BOUND FOR AFRICA REFUELED AT BARBADOS.

H. MILITARILY, UNITA AND FNLA FORCES ON THE WESTERN AND NORTH CENTRAL FRONTS SEEMED TO HAVE GAINED THE INITIATIVE AND ARE MOVING ON MPLA STRONGHOLDS. ON THE COASTAL FRONT THE UNITA/FLNA FORCE REMAINS STALLED AT NOVO REDONDO. IN THE NORTH AN MPLA FORCE HAS ADVANCED TO WITHIN 60 MILES OF A FLNA BASE BUT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO BREAK THROUGH THE  
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FLNA'S OUTER DEFENSES. ON 13 DECEMBER, THE MPLA DESTROYED BRIDGES ON THE BEGUELA RAILROAD AN ACTION WHICH EFFECTIVELY CLOSES THE RAIL LINE INTO ZAIRE AND ZAMBIA. THESE DEVELOPMENTS PROBABLY REFLECT THE SEESAW NATURE OF THE CONFLICT RATHER THAN SIGNIFICANT TRENDS.

I. BASED ON VOYAGE DATE, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE CUBAN VESSELS QUOTE IMIAS UNQUOTE, QUOTE VEINTE ANIVERSARIO UNQUOTE, AND QUOTE EL JIGUE UNQUOTE MAY HAVE ARRIVED IN THE CONGO/ANGOLA AREA DURING THE WEEK BEGINNING 7 DECEMBER.

J. IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, IT WAS ANNOUNCED ON THURSDAY (18 DEC) EVENING TV NEWS SHOW AND WAS REPORTED IN THE PRESS ON 19 DECEMBER THAT PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS

MADE UNEXPECTED ANNOUNCEMENT MIDWAY IN BUDGET DEBATE ON  
18 DECEMBER OF THE RESULTS SPECIAL CABINET CONSULTATIONS.  
WILLIAMS IN HIS STATEMENT TOLD THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-  
TIVES: QUOTE A REQUEST HAS BEEN MADE BY THE CUBAN GOVERN-  
MENT , THROUGH ITS CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES, TO THE DIR-  
ECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SEEKING  
PERMISSION TO LAND CUBAN ARMY PLANES AT PIARCO INTERNA-

TIONAL AIRPORT FOR REFUELING. THESE PLANES WILL BE  
TRANSPORTING CUBAN TROOPS TO ANGOLA. CABINET HAS REFUSED  
THE REQUEST OF THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT AND HAS MADE IT CLEAR  
THAT TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WILL NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES,  
EITHER INTERVENE IN ANGOLA'S AFFAIRS OR CONTRIBUTE, HOW-  
EVER INDIRECTLY, TO THE INTERVENTION OF ANY OTHER COUN-  
TRY. THE CABINET'S DECISION HAS BEEN PASSED TO THE  
DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION FOR TRANSMISSION TO THE CUBAN  
GOVERNMENT UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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